

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

WALTHAM, MASSACHUSETTS

June 9, 1954

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Lederberg,

We recently invited Dr. Norton Zinder to talk to our Interscience Seminar on his researches on bacterial transduction. Dr. Zinder made an excellent impression and we are seriously considering inviting him to join our faculty.

However, certain apparent deficiencies in Dr. Zinder's training and viewpoints have concerned some of us. In a small school like Brandeis a faculty man should have the broadest possible background in biology, because he will have to teach several different subjects, and participate actively in planning the biology curriculum. We had the impression, from our conversations with Dr. Zinder, that he was not very familiar with physiological problems, and did not seem to sense the great importance of physiology in biological thinking. For example, he did not think it at all advisable to have an undergraduate course devoted exclusively to some aspect of physiology.

We also wondered whether the fact that he obtained a degree in medical bacteriology indicated a background too specialized for a school such as ours where medical bacteriology per se is not likely to be taught.

There are plans for graduate work here in general microbiology and there is no doubt that he would fit in well in such a program. The question is how well would he fit into our undergraduate program. Besides microbiology, the only subject he really seems equipped to teach is genetics.

All these misgivings are minor when we consider his outstanding research and high intelligence. We would enormously appreciate your telling us what you know about Dr. Zinder, both in reference to his physiological abilities and in general about his character, possible teaching ability and anything else you think might be helpful to us in making our decision.

I might say that we have high hopes for our small school and would like, if possible, to add someone with Dr. Zinder's research ability to our faculty. Of course anything you write will be kept in strict confidence. Dr. Zinder is unaware of this inquiry.

Best personal wishes.

Sincerely yours,

Albert Kelner 

Albert Kelner
Assistant Professor of Biology

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